

THE REFORMER.

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Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth. Jeremiah, v. 1.

Religion supported by Law.

[For the information of our readers, we will present a brief sketch of some of the laws enacted by the Legislature of Virginia, while under the influence of an educated and intolerant priest-hood, and of the downfall of the hierarchy established in that state: principally extracted from *Henning's statutes, vol. I. and II. and Benedict's History of the Baptists.*]

The first settlers of Virginia being chiefly emigrants from England, brought with them all that religious intolerance which had so long prevailed in the mother country. Thus we see, that the first care of the early Legislatures, was to provide for the Church of England, as established by the act of Parliament. By the first act of 1623, it is provided, that in every plantation or settlement, there shall be a house or room set apart for the worship of God. But it soon appears that this worship was only to be according to the canons of the Church of England, to which a strict uniformity was enjoined. A person absenting himself from divine service on a Sunday, without a reasonable excuse, forfeited a pound of tobacco; and he that absented himself a month, forfeited fifty pounds. Whoever disparaged a minister, whereby the minds of the parishioners might be alienated, was compelled to pay five hundred pounds of tobacco, and ask the minister's pardon publicly in the congregation. No man was permitted to dispose of any of his tobacco, till the minister was satisfied, under the penalty of forfeiting double his part of the minister's salary.

The first allowance made to the ministers, was ten pounds of tobacco and a bushel of corn for each tith-

able; and every labouring person, of what quality or condition soever, was bound to contribute. In the year 1631, the Assembly of Virginia granted to the ministers, besides the former allowance of ten pounds of tobacco and a bushel of corn, the twentieth calf, the twentieth kid, and the twentieth pig. This was the first introduction of tythes, properly so called, in Virginia.

To preserve the "*purity of doctrine, and unity of the church,*" it was enacted in 1643, that all ministers should be conformable to the orders and constitutions of the Church of England, and that no others be permitted to teach or preach publicly or privately. It was further provided, that the Governor and Council should take care, that all *non conformists* departed the colony with all conveniency.

The Quakers were now flying from persecution in England. They cast their eyes on these new countries, as asylums of civil and religious freedom; but they soon found them free only for the reigning sect. When they first made their appearance in Virginia, the utmost degree of persecution was exercised towards them. Several acts of the Virginia Assembly of 1659, 1662, and 1663, had made it penal in their parents to refuse to have their children baptized; had prohibited the unlawful assembling of the Quakers; had made it penal for any master of a vessel to bring a Quaker into the state; had ordered those already here, and such as should come hereafter, to be imprisoned till they should abjure the country; provided a milder punishment for their first and second return, but death for the third; had inhibited all persons from suffering their meetings in or near their houses, entertaining them individually, or disposing of books which supported their tenets. If no capital execution took place here, as did in New England, it was not owing to the moderation of the church, or spirit of the Legislature, as may be inferred from the law itself; but to historical circumstances, which have not been handed down to us.

A levy of fifteen pounds of tobacco per poll, was laid in the year 1655, upon all titheables; the surplus of which, after paying the minister's salary, was to be laid out in purchasing a glebe and stock for the minister. This law was re-enacted in the revisal of 1657.

After the restoration of Charles II. 1660, the supremacy of the Church of England was again fully established. The first nine acts of the Legislature, held in March, 1661, are devoted to that subject. A church was to be built in each parish, and vestries appointed. Glebes [tracts of land] were directed to be procured for the ministers, and convenient houses built thereon; in addition to which, their salaries were fixed at 80 pounds per annum, at least, besides their perquisites. No minister was permitted to preach, unless he had received ordination from some bishop in England. If any person, without such ordination, attempted to preach publicly or privately, the Governor and Council might suspend and silence him; and, if he persisted, they were empowered to send him out of the country. In those parishes where there was not a minister to officiate every Sunday, a *reader* was to be appointed, whose duty it was to read Divine Service every intervening Sunday. The liturgy, according to the canons of the church of England, was to be read every Sunday by the minister or reader; and the administration of the sacraments was to be duly observed. No other catechism than that inserted in the book of Common Prayer could be taught by the minister; nor could a reader attempt to expound that or the scriptures. Every person was compelled to go to church every Sunday, under the penalty of fifty pounds of tobacco. But Quakers and non-conformists were liable to the penalties of the statute of 23d Elizabeth, which was 20 pounds sterling for every month's absence. Quakers were further liable to a fine of 200 pounds of tobacco, for each one found at one of

their meetings; and in case of the insolvency of any one of them, those who were able were to pay for the insolvents*

Various other laws passed between the above period and the commencement of the American Revolution, by which the Episcopal establishment was protected. The salary of the ministers was first settled at 16,000 pounds of tobacco in the year 1696, to be levied by the vestry on the titheables of their parish, and so continued to the revolution. Any minister admitted into a parish, was entitled to all the spiritual and temporal rights thereof, and might maintain an action against any person who attempted to disturb him in his possession. The same acts provided for the purchase of glebes for the ministers.

The Baptists, at this time, were almost the only dissenters who gave them any annoyance. When they first made their appearance in Virginia, they were viewed by men in power as beneath their notice; they said, "none but the weak and wicked join them; let them alone, they will soon fall out among themselves, and come to nothing." For a while this maxim was adhered to: but at length, alarmed by the increase of the Baptists, the men in power strained every penal law in the Virginia code, to obtain ways and means to put down these disturbers of the peace, as they were now called. They were molested in their assemblies and their preachers hauled to prisons. Although it seems by no means certain, that any law in force in Virginia authorized the imprisonment of any person for preaching; the law for the preservation of

* It is worthy of remark that the State of Maryland, which was first settled by Roman Catholics, gave free toleration to all religious sects. At a very early period, the Assembly of this State, (then a province) enacted, "that no persons, professing to believe in Jesus Christ, should be molested in respect of their religion, or in the free exercise thereof, or be compelled to the exercise of any other religion, against their consent; so that they be not unfaithful to the proprietary, or conspire against the civil government." In consequence of this free toleration, numbers emigrated to Maryland.

"Extraordinary scenes," says one, "were at this time, exhibited on the colonial theatres. In Massachusetts, the Congregationalists intolerant towards the Episcopalians, and every other sect; the Episcopal church retaliating upon them in Virginia; and the Roman Catholics of Maryland tolerating and protecting all."

peace, was so interpreted as to answer this purpose ; and, accordingly, whenever the preachers were apprehended, it was done by a peace-warrant, and they were imprisoned as disturbers of the peace.

The Episcopal clergy seemed very willing to do their part. Sometimes the rector of the parish would give notice, that on a certain day, *he would prove the Baptists to be deceivers, and their doctrines false.* The attempt was often made, but they uniformly injured their own cause. Not unfrequently, their leading men would attend the Baptist meetings, and would enter into arguments with the preachers : they insisted that their church was the oldest, and consequently the best ; that their ministers were learned men, and consequently most competent to interpret scripture ; that the better sort and well-informed, adhered to them, whilst none, or scarcely any except the lower order, followed the Baptists ; that they were all in peace and friendship before the coming of the Baptists, but now their houses and neighbourhoods were filled with religious disputes ; that the Baptists were false prophets, who were to come in sheeps' clothing.

To these arguments the Baptist preachers replied, that if they were wolves in sheeps' clothing, and their opponents were true sheep, it was quite unaccountable that they were persecuted, and cast into prison ; it is well known that wolves would destroy sheep, but never, until then, that sheep would prey upon wolves ; that their coming might, indeed, interrupt their peace ; but certainly, if it did, it must be a false peace, bordering on destruction ; that the effects of their coming were similar to those foretold by Christ, as arising from the propagation of his word, namely, "*that there should be five in one house, three against two, and two against three ;*"* that

* Whenever any people make their appearance, that live more holy than the general body of professors, and are likely to make mankind better, the advocates of anti-christ are always aroused up, and make opposition. But let the same people come to be much in the same state as other professors, and they can then have fellowship with them, think well of them, and speak in their favour : for the *world*, as our Saviour has said, *will love his own.* It is only between the *seed of the serpent*, and the *seed of the woman*, that enmity and opposition exist ; and cannot but exist in the nature of

if the higher rank in society did not countenance them, it was no more than what befel their master, and his inspired apostles ; that rich men, in every generation, with some few exceptions, were enemies to the pure gospel ; but that God had declared, that he had chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith ; that, it was true, most of their preachers were unlearned, yet that they had evidences they were called to the ministry by the will of God ; that this was the most essential qualification of a minister, the want of which, all the learning of all the schools could not supply.

Foiled in their arguments, they would again resort to the civil power. But the persecution of the Baptists, so far from impeding, really promoted their cause. Their preachers when cast into prison used to preach to the people through the grates ; to prevent which, some men would be at the expence of erecting a high wall round the prison ; others would employ half-drunken strolls to beat a drum round the prison, to prevent the people from hearing.

From the beginning, the Baptists were unremitting in their exertions to obtain liberty of conscience ; and after a time things tended very much to favour their wishes. The patient manner in which they suffered persecution, raised their reputation for piety and goodness, in the estimation of a large majority of the people ; their congregations were large, and some of the leading men favoured them. Many, who had expressed great hostility to them, upon forming a more close acquaintance with them, professed to be undeceived, and their numbers annually increased in a surprising degree. Many of the established clergy were men of the loosest morals, and

things. The one can no more have fellowship with the other than light with darkness—each necessarily counteracting and opposing the other.

And here it may be observed, the little opposition now going on in the world, when so much evil remains in it, marks the feeble state of the principle on the side of truth ; and shows that professors are nearly all on one side, or much in the same condition. But this state of things will not always continue : truth and righteousness will at length come forth ; the struggle will be general, and the contest great : and as ever has been the case, the righteous must first suffer, and then reign.

actions plainly forbidden in the New Testament, they often proclaimed as harmless and innocent, by which the people of their charge were left almost destitute of even the shadow of true religion.* But possessing a classical education, patronized by men in power, connected with great families, supported by competent salaries, and put into office by the strong arm of civil power, they felt themselves secure—while these things served but as a prelude to their calamity, and seemed to hasten their downfall.

The British yoke had now galled many of the Virginians to the quick, and they began to manifest uneasiness. Republican principles had gained much ground, and were fast advancing to superiority: the leading political men on that side, viewed the established clergy and the established religion as inseparable appendages of monarchy, one of the pillars by which it was supported. The dissenters, at least the Baptists, were republicans from interest, as well as principle, and their influence was great among the common people. Hence it was necessary for the republican party, in order to carry their plans into effect, to soothe their minds, by every species of policy. There had been a time, when they would have been satisfied to have paid their tythes, if they could have had liberty of conscience; but now the crisis was such, that nothing less than a total overthrow of all ecclesiastical distinctions, would satisfy their sanguine hopes. Having started the decaying edifice, every dissenter put to his shoulder, to push it into irretrievable ruin. The revolutionary party found that the sacrifice must be made, and they made it.

At the October session, 1776, the first law was passed suspending the payment of the salaries formerly allowed to the ministers of the church of England. The preamble of this act was probably drawn by Mr. Jefferson, who was then a member. A number of memorials from different religious societies, dissenters from the church of England, were presented to this assembly, praying to be exempted from parochial dues to the church of England,

* Nothing has ever proved so destructive to pure and genuine christianity, as to undertake to support the priest-hood and enforce the worship of God by law.

and for the abolition of the established church. In opposition to these, there was a memorial from the clergymen of the church of England, praying that the establishment might be continued. These memorials formed the basis of the act of the session already mentioned; "exempting the different societies of dissenters from contributing to the support and maintenance of the church, as by law established, and its ministers."

At the May session, 1777, the payment of the salaries, allowed to the clergy of the church of England, was further suspended; and at the October session, 1779, so much of every act as related to the salaries formerly given to the clergy of the church of England, was repealed.

In 1784, the subject of a general assessment was again revived. A bill, which had for its object the compelling of every person to contribute to some religious teacher, was introduced into the House of Delegates, under the title of "A bill, establishing provision for the teachers of the christian religion;" but on its third reading, it was postponed till the fourth Thursday in November then next; ayes 45, noes 38. The bill, by an order of the General Assembly, was published in handbills, and distributed in the respective counties, that the people might signify their opinion respecting the adoption of such a bill to the next session of Assembly.

This drew forth a number of able and animated memorials from religious societies of different denominations, against the general assessment. The Baptists took a decided stand against this bill, and at their annual session in 1785, expressed in their memorial: That it is believed to be repugnant to the spirit of the gospel, for the Legislature thus to proceed in matters of religion: That no human laws ought to be established for this purpose, but that every person ought to be left entirely free, in respect to matters of religion: That the holy Author of our religion needs no such compulsive measures for the promotion of his cause: That the gospel wants not the feeble arm of man for its support: That it has made, and will again, through divine power, make its way against all opposition: And that, should the Legislature assume the right of taxing the people for the support of the gospel, it will be destructive to religious liberty.

The sentiments of the people appearing to be decidedly against a general assessment, the question was given up.

At the same session, however, (Oct. 1784) in which the bill providing for a general assessment failed, an act passed for "incorporating the Protestant Episcopal church." This bill, passed the House of Delegates by a small majority only, ayes 47, noes 38; but in 1786 it was repealed. And the Legislature of 1798 repealed all laws vesting property in the hands of any religious sect, by which the Episcopalians were deprived of the glebes, &c. and all religious sects were put into a state of perfect equality, as it respected the favours of government.

After the foregoing statements, respecting the Episcopal church in Virginia, we might with propriety advert to the laws and transactions of the clergy and rulers, in New England. This however must be deferred till our next number for want of room, and we shall here only notice some of the laws which now exist in that section of the country, particularly in Massachusetts, where the Andover Seminary is established, and such efforts are making to furnish "competent religious teachers," for the whole population of our land.*

It is observed, by a late writer, when speaking of New England: "Although the American Revolution shook very sensibly the system of religious oppression, it was not the cause of its demolition here, as it was the case in Virginia. Many of its bands, were indeed broken, yet some by the vigilance of a watchful priest-hood, were preserved entire. In the unsettled state of affairs, which succeeded the war, a petition was preferred to the legislature, praying 'that ministers should *in future* be supported by Christ's authority, and not at all by assessment and secular force.' And had statesmen been let alone in

* A writer in the *Boston Recorder* of November 10, speaking of the advantages of great and united combinations, observes: "The American Education Society, has effected more than all other independent education societies in the Union,—because it assumed broad ground; proffered its bounty to proper candidates over the whole extent of our country, and called in funds from every state. If they need a special increase of funds on any emergency, they have the ear of the whole country to listen to their calls, because they propose nothing less than to convey the blessing of an educated clergy to the whole country."

their discussions, it is highly probable that this petition would have been regarded ; but the clergy, were afraid to be left on this precarious ground ; they therefore put forth their cries ; legislators heard them, pitied their dangerous condition, and disgraced their state constitution, with an article to regulate religious worship."

We now proceed to give a statement of some of the laws, now existing in Massachusetts, for the support of ministers and religious worship. In the third article of the Constitution it says, "the Legislature shall, from time to time, authorize and require the several towns, parishes, and precincts, &c. to make suitable provision, at their own expense, for the institution of the public worship of God, and for the support and maintenance of public protestant teachers of piety, religion, morality," &c. The way in which this provision was to be made, was prescribed by an act of 1786, which impowers "the qualified voters of any parish, or precinct, at every annual meeting, to grant such sum or sums of money as they shall judge necessary, for ministers, meeting-house, or other parish charges, to be assessed on the poles [*people*] and property, within the same, as by law provided."*

The following law, moreover, was enacted March 4th,

* The Congregational denomination, is not named in this act : the power was given to the majority of every parish, precinct, &c. but it was well known to the law-makers, that the Congregationalists, with very few exceptions, composed this majority, so that they without being named as such, became, in fact, the established party, and had a control of all other sects put into their hands. Thus the Congregational party was put in possession of a religious establishment, and conducted the business of parish taxes as they pleased ; and all minorities were obliged to submit to their regulations. But there was still one avenue left for the escape of dissenters. It was declared, in the Bill of Rights, that "all monies paid by the subject, to the support of public worship, &c. shall, if he require it, be uniformly applied to the support of a public teacher or teachers of his own religious sect or denomination, provided there be any on whose instructions he attends ;" otherwise his money is forfeited to the use of the parish. The construction put upon this article was, that the money must be paid into the treasury, and then be drawn out by an order on the treasurer, &c. And in this way the business was conducted for about thirty years after the adoption of the Constitution. The Baptists, and all others, excepting the Society of Friends, *must* pay their proportion towards the support of religion, and then they *might* draw their money back again, if they *could*, for their own ministers. Those communities

1800 :—“ Be it further enacted, that every corporate town, parish, precinct, district, and other body politic or religious society aforesaid, is hereby required to be constantly supplied with a public protestant teacher of piety, religion and morality; and in default of being so provided and supplied, for the term of three months in any six

of the established order, who were condescending upon the matter, paid over these monies without hesitation; but in many cases, difficulties ensued, and the money, once deposited in the treasury, could not be drawn back without a legal process, and not always then. Laws made in favour of dissenters, were often administered against them; the course of justice was prevented by the quibbles of lawyers, and the connivance of courts. Assessors, collectors, treasurers, judges, and jurors, were generally against them, and hence, their attempts at redress were easily defeated. It would be tedious, to go over the whole history of this perplexing economy: it is sufficient to observe, that in a multitude of cases, the Baptists, as well as others, were treated in a churlish, fraudulent, and abusive manner, shuffled out of their rights, and obliged to sit down and console themselves for their losses as well as they could.

In this posture the business of taxes for religious purposes remained, until the beginning of 1811, when an event took place, which awakened the fears and called forth the energies of the united body of dissenters. At the time referred to, the late judge Parsons, then Chief Justice of the state, in a trial of one of these cases, respecting drawing back money, &c. decided, that no society, except those which were incorporated by law, could be entitled to the privilege. The complaints, remonstrances, and petitions at this time, from various bodies of dissenters, by reason of these proceedings were such, that the Legislature deemed it advisable to pass a law to the following effect: That whenever any person shall become a member of any religious society, corporate or incorporate, and shall produce a certificate of such membership to the clerk of the town where he dwells, signed by a committee of the society, chosen for the purpose, such person shall ever afterwards, so long as he continues such membership, be exempted from taxation, for the support of public worship and public teachers of religion, in every other religious corporation whatsoever. This law afforded peculiar relief to dissenters, but still neither party is satisfied with it. The Congregationalists are afraid they have given up too much, but the dissenters suppose they have not yet obtained what they claim as their just and indisputable right, viz. a free exemption from all taxes and all certificates. It may, also, be proper here to remark, that all those who are not members of some particular religious denomination, are obliged to pay the parish tax, whether they attend to hear the preaching of the minister or not. The law requires it, and there is no way for them to escape, whatever reluctance they may feel towards such payment.

months, such town, parish, precinct, district and other body politic, or religious society, which shall in the judgment of the court of general sessions of the peace for the same county be adjudged of sufficient ability to be so provided, shall pay a fine, for a first offence, of a sum not exceeding 60 dollars, nor less than thirty; and for each and every like offence after the first, a fine not exceeding 100 dollars, nor less than 60 dollars; together with cost of prosecution; such fine to be recovered by indictment in the court of general sessions of the peace in the county where such delinquency may happen; and levied on the inhabitants composing such town, parish, precinct, district, and other body politic, or religious society, so delinquent, in the same manner as other fines are levied on the inhabitants of towns. And every such fine shall be disposed of, by order of said court, to the support of the public worship of God, in such religious society in the same county, as, in the opinion of said court, shall stand most in need thereof."

This law gives no liberty to the people at all, to judge of their abilities to employ a minister. The court must judge of that, and also, appropriate the fine levied to whatever parish they may think fit. What sort of public worship must that be which is supported by money taken by force by a court, from poor honest labouring men, who do not choose to employ a hireling minister, that might not be of any use but only an injury to them.

It would appear as if this law was made, in order that ministers, and young students coming from college, might find employment. For if there was no law in Massachusetts, to oblige people to have and support a minister, many of the ministers, at the price they require for their services, might remain without any situation, or be under the necessity to turn their attention to some other calling. It is unnecessary to remark further respecting this law: it speaks for itself, and fully evinces the influence of the clergy on the Legislature. And will not all ministers brought up and educated in that section of the country, be favourably disposed towards such an order of things, and be ready on every occasion to seek the aid of human laws to support their claims over the people, as well as to put down whatever may annoy them in their proceedings or militate against their interest.

For the Reformer.

“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.”

I have often been led to reflect on the extent of this commandment; and in my belief, there is none so little attended to by those who profess to fear God and keep his commandments: either, owing to not being thoroughly acquainted with the extent of it, or an unwillingness to come under its government. Men, unenlightened by the precepts of the gospel, suppose it extends no further than it has relation to the civil law; and this class of people, generally take care to do nothing to injure their neighbour's character, when it would be likely to subject them to be tried in a court of justice; and the fear of the penalty keeps them within the bounds of prudence. But these men, I shall for the present pass by, and proceed to a few observations on the conduct of such, as profess to be the followers of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and who, with a few exceptions, I believe to be the most guilty of breaking this commandment. These believing themselves to be the favourites of heaven, and like the Pharisees of old, zealous for fulfilling the traditions of their fathers, holding out to the view of the world, that they are the followers of a meek and crucified Saviour; that they are governed by his precepts, and enlightened by his Spirit. These that profess to one another, they discourage tale-bearing and detraction, and desire to live in love and unity; how far do they fall short of all this? Are not many of this class, often very industriously employed in circulating reports, very derogatory to the reputation of their neighbours, and those whom they acknowledge as their intimate friends? This is an undeniable fact, and hence they break this commandment; and by their example, teach others to do the same; “and such shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.” I have no intention of extending my communication to any great length; I wish all to see, that these things ought not so to be; that as christians, it is our duty to love one another; and first to tell them of their faults—and to “do unto others, as we would that they should do unto us.” And this, by an attention to the precepts of the gospel, will readily be perceived to be the path marked out for those, who call themselves the followers of Christ.

H. W.

For the Reformer.

Messrs. Editors.—I have been a reader of your little work from its first number. From the statements therein contained, as well as from other documents which have fallen under my notice, I have no doubt of the justness of your apprehensions respecting the real character and views of many of the clergy of our country. I am sure I am not a lover of discord, and would be glad to see the day when mankind should live together in mutual friendship and harmony; but before this can be the case, the great foundation principle of moral rectitude *justice* must become more generally a rule of action in our intercourse with others. This is opposed to all aggression and usurpation. There can be no cordiality between the aggressor and him whose rights he would infringe. And although Christians have a still higher rule for their government than moral justice, which rule requires them to suffer wrong, but not to commit it, it doth not require that they should forbear to expose the machinations of a common enemy, though covered with ever so splendid a screen, from common observation.

The spirit and temper of some of the clergy, and of those who have been instructed by them,—their views of the nature of civil government, the power and duty of magistrates and ministers, and of the duties of private citizens in relation to these, are strikingly exemplified in an essay which appeared in the "Boston Patriot;" and which, with others in reply, have been embodied in a pamphlet entitled "Sunday Police."—Without expressing an opinion on the main question in that controversy, I would observe, that these essays, carry with them no equivocal indications of what *some* men, under the mask of great zeal for religion and moral order, *would* do, if they were invested with secular power. In the face of a republican community, they unblushingly avow the doctrine, that civil magistrates, as well as ministers of the gospel, (so called) hold their appointments immediately from God; and for the special purpose of enforcing his laws "on those over whom *he has placed them as rulers;*" of which laws, be it observed, they constitute themselves sole interpreters.—"For this reason God hath appointed his magistrates and ministers," &c. Again. "I now ask, why are these ministers *appointed*, and this plain positive law [the scriptures] put into their hands, if they are not to *enforce* it on their subjects, to be the regulator of their conduct?"

One would suppose, that *such sentiments* offered to a republican community, if it were not on so serious a subject, would appear ludicrous; or might be considered as the raving of a maniac.* Yet

* *Note by the Editors.*—By means of a false construction of passages of scripture, every species of tyranny in governments and persecution yet carried on, has been supported. A public Journal, not long since was announced, in the German Empire, the object of which is stated to be, "to secure the influence of religion in politics. . . It is by religion that it will endeavour to strengthen the system of the legitimacy of thrones and of power; and it will bring forward the christian religion as the true basis of the existing order of things, and the cause of its support." Some of the principal ministers of state, and a famous ecclesiastic, are among the conductors.

such is the tone of feeling excited by the ministry of a college-bred clergy, that in some parts of our country, where their influence is best established, they seem to excite in the common mind, neither surprise nor disapprobation! If the imposing question above quoted should need a more serious notice, it may be answered:—1st, that we are no longer under the Theocracy: [such a government as existed among the Israelites prior to the time of the kings, when magistrates and rulers received their appointment immediately from God.] Our magistrates are appointed by sinful and fallible men like themselves, to execute the laws made by rulers chosen by the people; the power of which rulers is wisely circumscribed by the will of their constituents, expressed in the constitution. And as to ministers, this constitution recognizes no such body as possessing any civil power, or any power whatever, other than what the members of their own society see fit to invest them with, in relation to their own sect. The framers of our civil compact, having exploded the doctrine of “the divine right of kings,” and adopted more correct views of the nature of civil government,—and having also before their eyes the abominations which, in the old world, arose from investing religious bodies with secular power, took special care to guard against the recurrence of such a calamity, in this virgin country. So that in fact, the very thing which a certain class would make it the duty of magistrates to *enforce*, is that which it is one of their most imperious duties to prevent, viz.—the forcible interference of any men, or set or sect of men, with the religious opinions and practices of their fellow citizens.

But though the framers of our constitution did what they could to prevent the deprecated catastrophe, which some now seem labouring to effect, it behooves to bear in mind, that *all* human institutions are liable to change; and that purity of practice can only be preserved by a frequent recurrence to *first principles*. If history is (as it is said to be) “Philosophy teaching by example,” then, it is a proposition too well established to admit of doubt, that “if once an arrogant and overbearing priesthood should obtain an ascendancy in the councils of the nation, peace and tranquillity could only be enjoyed by an obedience to their mandates, and the adoption of their creed.” And when the character and circumstances of this class of the community are considered—their learning and talents, their subtlety, their industry, and the imposing effect of the nature and accompaniments of their assumed office, (all tending to augment their influence over the minds of the people) who will say, that such an ascendancy is not among possibilities? Nay, when it is further considered, that one of their prominent doctrines is, that “A learned clergy” (and a well paid clergy) “are *essential* to the *political* and moral welfare of the community;” and that they now, after so many exertions to raise money, complain, that not one in twenty of their number receives “an adequate pecuniary support from his congregation,” who will say that the deprecated ascendancy is not among *probabilities*? Will not every nerve be exerted, *is* not every nerve exerted, to give greater certainty and permanency to a fund which they consider as *essential* to

For the Reformer.

Messrs. Editors.—I have been a reader of your little work from its first number. From the statements therein contained, as well as from other documents which have fallen under my notice, I have no doubt of the justness of your apprehensions respecting the real character and views of many of the clergy of our country. I am sure I am not a lover of discord, and would be glad to see the day when mankind should live together in mutual friendship and harmony; but before this can be the case, the great foundation principle of moral rectitude *justice* must become more generally a rule of action in our intercourse with others. This is opposed to all aggression and usurpation. There can be no cordiality between the aggressor and him whose rights he would infringe. And although Christians have a still higher rule for their government than moral justice, which rule requires them to suffer wrong, but not to commit it, it doth not require that they should forbear to expose the machinations of a common enemy, though covered with ever so splendid a screen, from common observation.

The spirit and temper of some of the clergy, and of those who have been instructed by them,—their views of the nature of civil government, the power and duty of magistrates and ministers, and of the duties of private citizens in relation to these, are strikingly exemplified in an essay which appeared in the "Boston Patriot;" and which, with others in reply, have been embodied in a pamphlet entitled "Sunday Police."—Without expressing an opinion on the main question in that controversy, I would observe, that these essays, carry with them no equivocal indications of what *some* men, under the mask of great zeal for religion and moral order, *would* do, if they were invested with secular power. In the face of a republican community, they unblushingly avow the doctrine, that civil magistrates, as well as ministers of the gospel, (so called) hold their appointments immediately from God; and for the special purpose of enforcing his laws "on those over whom *he has placed them as rulers;*" of which laws, be it observed, they constitute themselves sole interpreters.—"For this reason God hath appointed his magistrates and ministers," &c. Again. "I now ask, why are these ministers *appointed*, and this plain positive law [the scriptures] put into their hands, if they are not to *enforce* it on their subjects, to be the regulator of their conduct?"

One would suppose, that *such sentiments* offered to a republican community, if it were not on so serious a subject, would appear ludicrous; or might be considered as the raving of a maniac.* Yet

* *Note by the Editors.*—By means of a false construction of passages of scripture, every species of tyranny in governments and persecution yet carried on, has been supported. A public Journal, not long since was announced, in the German Empire, the object of which is stated to be, "to secure the influence of religion in politics. . . It is by religion that it will endeavour to strengthen the system of the legitimacy of thrones and of power; and it will bring forward the christian religion as the true basis of the existing order of things, and the cause of its support." Some of the principal ministers of state, and a famous ecclesiastic, are among the conductors.

such is the tone of feeling excited by the ministry of a college-bred clergy, that in some parts of our country, where their influence is best established, they seem to excite in the common mind, neither surprise nor disapprobation! If the imposing question above quoted should need a more serious notice, it may be answered:—1st, that we are no longer under the Theocracy: [such a government as existed among the Israelites prior to the time of the kings, when magistrates and rulers received their appointment immediately from God.] Our magistrates are appointed by sinful and fallible men like themselves, to execute the laws made by rulers chosen by the people; the power of which rulers is wisely circumscribed by the will of their constituents, expressed in the constitution. And as to ministers, this constitution recognizes no such body as possessing any civil power, or any power whatever, other than what the members of their own society see fit to invest them with, in relation to their own sect. The framers of our civil compact, having exploded the doctrine of “the divine right of kings,” and adopted more correct views of the nature of civil government,—and having also before their eyes the abominations which, in the old world, arose from investing religious bodies with secular power, took special care to guard against the recurrence of such a calamity, in this virgin country. So that in fact, the very thing which a certain class would make it the duty of magistrates to *enforce*, is that which it is one of their most imperious duties to prevent, viz.—the forcible interference of any men, or set or sect of men, with the religious opinions and practices of their fellow citizens.

But though the framers of our constitution did what they could to prevent the deprecated catastrophe, which some now seem labouring to effect, it behooves to bear in mind, that *all* human institutions are liable to change; and that purity of practice can only be preserved by a frequent recurrence to *first principles*. If history is (as it is said to be) “Philosophy teaching by example,” then, it is a proposition too well established to admit of doubt, that “if once an arrogant and overbearing priesthood should obtain an ascendancy in the councils of the nation, peace and tranquillity could only be enjoyed by an obedience to their mandates, and the adoption of their creed.” And when the character and circumstances of this class of the community are considered—their learning and talents, their subtlety, their industry, and the imposing effect of the nature and accompaniments of their assumed office, (all tending to augment their influence over the minds of the people) who will say, that such an ascendancy is not among possibilities? Nay, when it is further considered, that one of their prominent doctrines is, that “A learned clergy” (and a well paid clergy) “are *essential* to the *political* and moral welfare of the community;” and that they now, after so many exertions to raise money, complain, that not one in twenty of their number receives “an adequate pecuniary support from his congregation,” who will say that the deprecated ascendancy is not among *probabilities*? Will not every nerve be exerted, *is* not every nerve exerted, to give greater certainty and permanency to a fund which they consider as *essential* to

the *existence* of their order ; without which, in fact, they " can do nothing?" Believing as they profess to do, would they now, as legislators, scruple to enact laws, which should provide for a permanent source of revenue to an order which they consider as *essential* to the welfare of the community ?

I am informed that the bill, providing for public education, which was left over from the last session of our legislature, requires, as a qualification in teachers of the public schools, the certificate of a minister of the Gospel. Now, though there is nothing positively sectarian in this, its operation will in many cases be so :—Some considerable congregations of Christians have *no* minister, and *cannot make one*. There are also, in some districts, numbers who belong to no religious society. If, in such a district, there should be a sect who can make ministers at pleasure, such sect, though small in number, would have at least a veto on the appointment of a teacher. Under what influence such a provision may have originated I will not undertake to say. It may have been an oversight. But, it appears to me, that the people of these states cannot guard, too scrupulously, every avenue to sectarian domination. As in the question of slavery, there is a point which if it reach, all further efforts against it, will be ineffectual.

Before I lay aside my pen, I would make a few observations on the doctrine already briefly noticed, " that a College education is *essential* to ministers of the Gospel." This is a doctrine, which, it appears to me, the clergy are of late more than usually anxious to impress upon the minds of the people. Nor is this to be wondered at. The doctrine is of vital importance to the existence of a hireling minister : Destroy it, and the magnificent edifice they have been at so much pains to erect, falls to the ground. Without this they can do nothing.

I am aware that little new can be said on either side of the question ; but while its advocates are so frequently bringing it into public view, and bringing to its support every argument which learning and ingenuity can devise, it seems proper that its fallacy should be from time to time exposed. The arguments of P. Lindsly, as quoted in your twenty second number, though not new, are imposing. The grand error appears to be here,—that Christianity is treated as a mere human science, to be acquired in the same manner as other human sciences, and by the exercise of the same faculties. Now man is a threefold being, composed of " body, soul and spirit." To each department of his nature his Maker has assigned appropriate perceptive faculties, or senses ; each system of senses being adapted to the objects of its own department, as much as each of the bodily senses is adapted to inform us of particular qualities in material objects. There are the material, the intellectual, and the spiritual worlds ; and there are the corporeal, the intellectual, and the spiritual senses.

Now vital religion belongs neither to the natural nor to the intellectual departments of man—but to the spiritual ; and it is only by the exercise of the spiritual senses that any man can attain to just and clear conceptions of the nature of spiritual things—the attributes of the Deity, and his will concerning him, his own fallen

state, and the means of salvation. As a simple act of vision gives such a knowledge of the nature of light and colours, and of the appearance of outward objects, as no description could do, without it; so, an emanation of light from the Father of Spirits to the spiritual eye of the humble and sincere inquirer, will convey to his understanding and feelings, such a conviction of the reality, and such a sense of the nature of the things which belong to his peace, as not all the learning in the world could imbue him with. This is the *revelation* necessary and all sufficient, not only for ministers of the gospel, but for every *private christian*; and without which all other knowledge is ineffectual. I do not, by this, mean to set at naught the Scriptures, or rightly authorized preaching, or any other subsidiary aid: but consider them all as secondary, and of themselves insufficient. Thus far as a brief exposition of my views in relation to this subject.

I shall now consider one of the capital arguments of the advocates for the *necessity* of college learning. "No man is expected to excel in any mechanical employment, in any literary or scientific pursuit," &c. "without serving an apprenticeship, or submitting to a proper course of discipline and preparatory study." "Who, for instance, would think of asking an ignorant peasant to construct a watch or a telescope?" This is true; but the course of discipline must be adapted to the nature of the thing to be acquired. Expertness in the mechanical arts must be obtained by the exercise of the physical powers;—Mathematics, Law, and other human sciences, by that of the intellectual; and a knowledge of Christianity, by a course of discipline in the school of Him who said, "learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." "If any man will be my disciple, let him take up his cross daily, and follow me." This is a course of discipline which human nature would gladly relinquish for something more splendid, less simple, and less severe: but without a compliance to its requirements, a man must forever remain ignorant of the true nature of Christianity, and can neither practise it nor recommend it to others. Surely, whatever learning is necessary to enable ministers to understand and practise christianity, [in other words to *be christians*] must be necessary to every one who is expected to understand and practise it. If indeed learning affords the only access to the evidences of religion, I see not why an illiterate man is more secure of being right, when he receives his creed of a protestant clergyman, than when he receives it of a Romish Priest, a Brahmin, or a disciple of Mohamed. So long as his teacher has any "temptation to employ his information for a sinister purpose," he is certainly not secure from becoming "a prey to any kind of imposition." Whether our clergy are totally exempt from any such temptation, let facts determine.

DANIEL.

It appears from a statement in the *Boston Recorder*, that in addition to those preparing for the ministry in Theological Seminaries, there are 253 charity Students in other Colleges, designed for the same object.

VARIOUS ARTICLES.

Ancient Church.—Another remnant of the ancient Christian church, is reported to have been lately discovered in the interior of Persia. This community is of Jewish origin, situated in Mesopotamia, and consists of about ten thousand persons. They have no connexion with either the Greek or Roman Church.

[*Theological Repertory.*

An Extract.—“Whoever rebels against the laws of his duty, and plainly affronts the dictates of his conscience, does that moment bid adieu to all true repose and quiet, and expose himself to the severe resentments of a self-tormenting mind. And though by secret acts of wickedness, he may be able possibly to drown and stifle the voice of it for a while, yet every little affliction or petty accident, will be apt to awaken it into horror, and to let in terror like an armed man upon him. A torment infinitely beyond what the most ingenious tyrants could ever contrive. Nothing so effectually invades our ease, as the reproaches of our own minds. The wrath of man may be endured, but the irruptions of conscience are irresistible.”

[*Cave.*

NEW PRESBYTERIAN MEETING-HOUSE.

The splendid edifice, built by the First Presbyterian Church in this City, fronting Washington Square, is now so far completed, that the Congregation assemble in it for worship. A communication, written by a member of the Congregation, and inserted in one of our daily papers, (Nov. 10.) states,

“This building is 120 feet by 75.—It contains on one floor a Church about 82 feet by 71—a vestibule or entrance, of about 36 feet square, and two rooms, each 11 feet square, where the Session and Trustees will hold their meetings. Over the vestibule and these rooms, there is a spacious Room for holding Prayer Meetings, 71 feet by 32. In this, almost the whole Congregation can assemble, setting on benches. The floor of the Church is an inclined plane, like the Pit of a Theatre, rising 40 inches in 64 feet.

“The whole building is probably not surpassed by any edifice for Public Worship in the United States.

“The whole expense, thus far, will, probably, be about 42,000 dollars for the building, and \$18,000 for the ground. Nearly two-thirds of this will be defrayed by the sale of the ground under the old Church, and of the additional pews which this Church contains more than the old one. These additional pews are to be sold at auction on Monday next, the 12th inst.”

[It appears by the papers, that the sale of the Pews was numerously attended, some of which sold as high as 625 dollars—and that 36 pews and 5 half pews, produced 15,330 dollars.]

This selling of Pews by a public auctioneer in a house of worship, exceeds any thing to be met with either among the Pharisees or Heathen. Expensive as was the temple at Jerusalem and as anxious as the Scribes and Pharisees were to extort money from the people, they never adopted this plan. The Temple was free to every worshipper among the Jews; and the same appears to have been the case with respect to every heathen temple of which we have any knowledge. And although we by no

means consider either the Pharisees or Heathen any model for christian congregations, an adherence to their practice in this particular would we think be highly commendable.

There is indeed, no warrant to be found either in the Old or New Testament for selling pews in a house of worship. But custom sanctions almost every thing, veils it deformity, and it commonly prevails just in proportion as it is calculated to draw forth money from the people and support grandeur.

The 12th annual meeting of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, was held in Springfield, (Mass.) at Masons' Hall, Sept. 19th and 20th, 1821. At this meeting it was "*Resolved*,—That any clergyman, on paying 50 dollars, and any layman, on paying 100, at any one time, shall have the privilege of attending the meetings of the Board, and of assisting in its deliberations, as honorary members,—but without the privilege of voting; this latter privilege being restricted by the act of Incorporation to members elected by ballot."

Resolutions of thanks were also voted :

"To the Hampden Lodge, for the use of Masons' Hall, at the present session : and

"To Col. Warriner, and the choir of singers under his direction, for their very interesting performances as a part of the religious exercises of the occasion." &c.

Among the numerous means made use of in this day, for some to arrive to fame and renown, at the expence of the honest and unsuspecting, is that of having children placed to board to attend the first schools, and taught the higher branches of education, when their parents or guardians have no funds, or never had any intention to pay. Persons are thus educated and prepared to move above the humble walk of common life, and by their learning and acquired abilities, aspire to offices of dignity and profit, while they look down with disdain and contempt, upon those at whose expence they have been able to soar above the range of "vulgar minds."

Missionaries at Serampore.

We have seen an article published in one of the New York City papers, intended perhaps to invalidate some statements made in the *Reformer*, of October last, relative to the proceedings of the three Missionaries Carey, Marshman and Ward, at Serampore. The article came to hand too late, and we have too little room left to enter into particulars respecting those proceedings. We will however here give an extract from a letter written by a Baptist Missionary now in India, embracing the substance of what we have stated. The person who wrote this letter could not be misinformed, being in India at the time, and all attempts to disprove the statements must be ineffectual. We proceed to the extract as here follows :

"The Missionaries [at Serampore,] began in a way which human frailty could not long sustain. What is *now* the result!! It is on my mind, and should I be fearful of exposing, what in official letters has been declared to all the junior brethren? that the *Triumvirate*, at Serampore have by a solemn act, pronounced themselves *henceforth disconnected from, and independent of the Society in England*,—all the junior missionaries sent out by that Society, they have cut off, and by a law (from whence obtained unknown) *declared the premises at Serampore to be their own exclusive property*. They reserve to themselves the *sole*

right of appointing successors. It is well known that the premises as well as themselves, have been considered as the Society's property. By their industry they have built up the place, beautified and enriched it. It is now too tempting a spectacle to be viewed as not their own. In this very act you see the *error in the original plan.* It is not justified, it excites general disgust; it is a mystery insolvable by many; but the Jesuitism long practised, has nearly as long been penetrated, by a few discerners, and now the chapter needs no index nor comment.

"Oh, for plain simplicity in such matters. Men should not trust too much to fellow men, on either side. A society in England or America, is in the dark. Things in India, are, and must necessarily be, different from their views. From time to time all the juniors have been, by affectionate words and gentle pressures, squeezed out from taking or acting any part at Serampore, very much to the disappointment of first views. The consequence of this surprising *result* has been, that Yates, E. Carey, Penny and Lawson, have formed themselves into a separate union, at Calcutta, opened a school, and are prospering on their own plan. They style themselves, 'the Missionary Society, auxiliary to the parent Society, in England.' They have been cordially acknowledged by the parent Society, are an enlightened party, and dwell in great unity."—"The brethren at Serampore, by their recent declarations, have greatly grieved all the younger brethren, that *they* should so have disgraced themselves, and driven them to such expedients. You will say, 'you are daring—you are trampling on venerable ground.' The pity is, that it *can* be touched by unhallowed steps. But those *without* will be the happier for what has taken place. They were before between 'hawk and buzzard.'"

Various evasions and palliations may be set forth. But to come to matters of fact. Did not the Missionaries at Serampore, at first agree that no one should engage in any private trade; but that whatever was acquired by any member of the family, should go into the common stock? And did they not hold the property at Serampore, as trustees, in behalf of the Society in England? But how do matters stand at this time? Do the three Missionaries, Carey, Marshman, and Ward, allow the Society in England to have any claim upon the property at Serampore? Do they not consider the New College as entirely their own? And is not the 10,000 dollars vested in this country, wholly under their control? And lastly, if Mrs. Marshman, from her school, in several years, could make 20,000 pounds sterling, what will not these Missionaries be able to make in a few years from their College?

[We did not incautiously make the statements given in the October number of this work, and if required, certificates from the most respectable source can be obtained to prove, that the preceding extract is contained in a letter from a Baptist missionary, now in India, who could have had no inducement to state things incorrectly.—On looking over the article from the New York paper, to which are affixed the names of two respectable individuals, we perceive the main matters spoken of in the extract are not touched upon, and at the same time, things are admitted respecting the Missionaries at Serampore, which seem not to accord with the agreement at first made among them, viz. that no one should engage in any private trade; but that whatever was acquired by any member of the family, should go into the common stock.]

We regret the circumstance of being under the necessity, to put the communication from DANIEL in small type, and of omitting several pieces intended for this number. There is not room to reply to correspondents.

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* * James V. Seaman, Bookseller, No. 296 Pearl-street, is Agent for New-York.

